

Submitter: Austin Payne  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3365

Dear Chair Neron and members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3365. My name is Austin Payne, I am a student at Willamette University and live in Salem. I am in strong support of HB3365 - which seeks to expand and integrate climate change instruction among K-12 core subjects.

I believe that climate education is not only a necessity but a moral obligation we owe to our children and future generations. Climate change is no longer a distant threat, it is a lived reality. We've all been witness to record breaking wildfires and extreme events across the country recently, which are not isolated incidents but direct consequences of climate change that's happening now.

What concerns me is the world we leave for future generations. Young people today are growing up in an era where climate disasters are increasingly common, yet many of them are not equipped with the knowledge necessary to understand or address the crisis. Without some climate literacy, they will be left unprepared to navigate the challenges ahead, let alone advocate for solutions

As a student, I was taught about weather patterns and the water cycle, but I was never given a true understanding of the climate crisis. Oftentimes we learned broadly what climate change and global warming was. Yet, we were told to recycle and be conservative or reduce waste, which I feel places the blame or the responsibility on us as individuals, rather than us learning how to systematically reduce the effects of climate change. As an adult, I realize how much my generation could have benefited from this knowledge earlier. I do not want today's students to grow up with the same gaps in education that I had.

Integrating climate education into all core subjects is a necessary step to prepare youth for the world they will inherit. By weaving climate change into language arts, we can foster critical thinking and communication skills necessary for advocacy. By incorporating it into mathematics, we can teach students how to analyze climate data. In social studies, we can explore the political and economic impacts of environmental policy. And in science, we can give students the tools to innovate and drive real change. Better climate education will empower students to become problem-solvers. By passing HB 3365, we can ensure that every student, regardless of their background, has access to the knowledge they need to tackle the defining issue of our time. I urge you to support this bill and take a stand for the future of our children and our planet.

Thank you,  
Austin Payne